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A FARTHER
A C C O U N T
OF THE LATE
MISSIONARIES
TO THE
W E S T I N D I E S :

I N
A L E T T E R
FROM THE

Rev. Dr. COKE, to the Rev. J. WESLEY.

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L O N D O N :

PRINTED IN THE YEAR M,DCC,LXXXIX.



A F A R T H E R
A C C O U N T, &c.

Jamaica, Feb. 3, 1789.

Hon. and most dear Sir,

ON Friday the 19th, we landed at Roseau in Dominica, and found our former kind friend Mrs. Webley ready to receive us. She had been informed by one of our Local-Preachers of St. Kitt's, who had lately made a visit to this Island, of my intention to visit her soon; and accordingly with some other friends hired a large room for a Preaching-House. After waiting on Governor Orde who, I think, is as polite a man as ever I was in company with, I preached in the evening, and on the Sunday following: Mr. Baxter also preached two sermons, whilst I made a visit to my old friend Mr. Charrurier, and opened a door or two among the Blacks in his neighbourhood. Before we left the Island, we formed a little Society of twenty-four desiring souls, some of whom had been members of our Connection in Antigua and St. Kitt's; and determined that Mr. M'Cornock should take the care of this Island.

On the 24th we landed at Antigua. Surely this Island is the favourite of heaven. It is supposed that it contains 7,000 Whites and 30,000 Blacks: and out of these 2800 are in our Society; and I suppose, the Moravians have not fewer than 2000 in theirs. So great a heaven is

not known perhaps in so small a country throughout the world. My congregation in St. John's, and one more in the country, would not have disgraced even those parts of England, where we have met with the greatest success.

I should not forget to acknowledge the usefulness of Mr. Warrenner in this religious Island. Though Mr. Baxter has been indeed the Father under God, of this blessed work. Mr. Warrenner has added not less than a thousand worthy members (I have reason to believe) to this Society.

Nor should the beautiful proof of love which our Society in this Island, give to their sick members, be overlooked. They attend them in their respective neighbourhoods with the greatest diligence and patience; and where it is wanting, provide every kind of medical help for them, without regarding the expence.

Till lately the Island was annually governed by a martial-law on Christmas-day and the two days following, the Negroes always being allowed those three days for themselves, on which many tumults and even robberies had been committed: but religion has now rendered this custom needless, and the declaration of martial-law is become a mere matter of form.

On the 27th of December we set sail for the Island of St. Christophers'. In our way we touched at Montserrat; but our only friend in that Island, one of the most respectable characters in it, not being at home, we resumed our voyage.

On the 29th we landed at Basse-Terre, the principal town of St. Kitt's. And here justice obliges me to bear a testimony of the good which has been wrought by Mr. Hammet, who has been the instrument of one of the greatest works of God I have known in the circle of my labours, considering the time he has been employed in it, and the nature of the work in which he has been engaged. In two years he has raised in this
Island,

Island, which was perfectly barren of all religion at the commencement of his labours, a Society of seven hundred members, a great part of whom, I have reason to believe, are members of Christ. Here the Lord has poured out the spirit of prophecy; four preachers being raised in this Society, who are capable and willing to devote themselves entirely to the work of the Ministry in this part of the world.

The second morning after my arrival, we were visited with a tremendous Earthquake. The beds, the rooms, the whole house in which we were, shook most terribly for several seconds. The shock was felt in other Islands.

From St. Kitt's we visited St. Eustatius. On Wednesday the 31st of December we landed there and were received by Mr. Lindsey, one of our friends, with every mark of kindness. We soon found that poor Harry was banished from the Island. When he stood before the Governor and Council, to answer for the unpardonable crime of praying with the people, one of the Council observed to him "Harry, you must be flogged:" to which he calmly replied, "Christ was flogged, and why should not I?" Soon after which they condemned him to be publicly whipped, imprisoned and banished. The whipping was executed in a most unmerciful manner under the direction of one Isaac de Lion, a black man, and an enemy to all righteousness—such a picture of Satan for subtilty and barbarity, never I think, before did I behold. He is the great executioner of all the cruel Edicts of the Court for the persecution of the children of God.

The most famous, or rather most infamous Edict which the Rulers of this Island have published, is as follows:

"That if any white person should be found praying with his brethren—for the first offence he should be fined fifty pieces of eight: for the second, one hundred pieces: and for the third

he should be whipped, his goods be confiscated, and he should then be banished the Island. That if a coloured man should be found praying—for the first offence he should receive thirty nine lashes; and for the second, if free, he should be whipped and banished; but if a slave, be whipped every time."

This, I think, is the first instance known among mankind, of a persecution openly avowed against *religion itself*. The persecutions among the Heathens were supported under the pretence that the Christians brought in strange Gods. Those among the Roman-Catholics were under the pretext of the Protestants introducing Heresies into the Church. But this is openly and avowedly against *Prayer*, the great Key to every blessing. How such a diabolical persecution can be suffered in this liberal tolerating age, is really surprizing!

However, we ventured to baptize about one hundred and forty of our Society. And even under this heavy cross and hot persecution, our numbers amount to two hundred and fifty eight; and of those, we have reason to believe that one hundred and thirty nine have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

On Thursday the 1st of January, we hired a sloop to carry us back to St. Christopher's. But, behold! as soon as we had begun to sail, we found that all the sailors were entirely drunk, the Captain excepted. In a little time they drove the sloop against a large ship, and damaged the boom and the yards of the main mast. Soon afterwards, when we came to the end of the Island, instead of crossing the channel to St. Kitt's, the sloop was carrying us into the open sea in its shattered condition. We then determined to return: but there was no one to turn the sloop about, till with great difficulty my friends, the Missionaries, unacquainted with such business, brought it round: and after running against another ship, by which the rudder was broke, and the stern much damaged

damaged : and after bribing the Captain with ten dollars, to save his own life as well as ours ; we were landed again on the Bay of St. Eustatius.

This series of misfortunes which obliged us to return, appeared a loud call of Providence, for me to bear a public testimony lest any friend should suffer whipping, confiscation of goods, or banished for a month, and the nextday I preached to a quiet and attentive congregation, and published myself for the Lord's day following.—All was peace till late in the Evening, when the Governor sent for Mr. Lindsey at whose house I was, and threatened him with terrible punishments.

In the morning, while we were at breakfast, the Marshal of the Court entered with great form, and delivered to us a message from the Governor and Fischal, which was, that they required us to promise, that we would not, publicly or privately, by day or by night, preach either to Whites or to Blacks during our stay in that Island, under the penalty, on default, of prosecution, *arbitrary punishment*, (that was the very expression) and banishment from the Island. We withdrew to consult ; and after considering that we were favoured by Providence with an open door in other Islands for as many Missionaries as we could spare, and that God was carrying on his blessed work even in this Island by the means of secret Class-Meetings, and that Divine Providence may in future redress these grievances by a change of the Governor, or by the interference of the superior Powers in Holland, in some other way, we gave our answer "That we would obey the government ;" and having nothing more at present to do in this place of tyranny, oppression and wrong ; we returned to St. Kitt's, blessing God for a British Constitution, and a British Government.

But let me intreat, let me implore, all those who read or hear this Journal, to remember that
 dear

dear persecuted people in their daily prayers, that the God who heareth prayer, may be graciously inclined, either to turn the hearts of the Rulers of St. Eustatius to mercy and truth, or the hearts of their superiors in Holland to disarm them of their so much abused power.

From St. Kitt's we also made two visits to the Island of Nevis. Here we were obliged to lie on the floor for two nights upon our hammocks, but God has opened in this Island a wide door for his Gospel. And the kindness of two or three Gentlemen, particularly the Judge of the Admiralty to whom we are highly obliged, rendered our situation tolerably comfortable. We formed here a Class of twenty-one Catechumens, and left the care of the Island to Mr. Owens.

On Wednesday evening the 14th of January we set off for the Island of Saba, which belongs to Holland. We had left at St. Eustatius, Mr. Brazier one of our Missionaries, who had been raised under Mr. Hammet; and who had not been included in the wonderful message sent to us by the Governor and Fischal, three only being there mentioned, Mr. Hammet, Mr. Meredith and myself. However, the Governor of St. Eustatius, all on fire to persecute, soon found him out, and by his threatenings dislodged him. Mr. Brazier, by the advice of a gentleman of the Island, a man in power, but a *Nicodemus*, removed to the Island of Saba.

When we landed, we were obliged to walk up a rock of a mile in length, which was in several places nearly perpendicular. Being informed that Mr. Brazier was at the house of the Governor, we immediately went there, and were received with the utmost kindness and hospitality by him, his family, and the inhabitants in general.

The little Island of Saba contains about one thousand Whites and about two thousand Blacks, men, women and children included. For seven-
teen

teen years, that simple-hearted people have been without a regular Minister. The Governor, council and people petitioned that Mr. Brazier, who had preached three times in the church, (which is no contemptible building) might remain among them. I informed them of our æconomy, and particularly of our grand and indispensable custom of changing our Ministers. They were willing to comply with every thing, to grant to our Minister the parsonage house, and to allow him a sufficient maintenance. What could I do? Mr. Brazier was appointed to labour under Mr. Hammet at Jamaica: but I could not bear that this delightful people should perish for lack of knowledge. I left therefore Mr. Brazier behind me, having spent two pleasing days with these inhabitants of the rock. May they all be built on the Rock of Ages!

My heart is too much engaged in the interests of this plain, honest Colony, for me to omit transcribing the sentiments of a celebrated French writer concerning them.

“This is a steep rock, on the summit of which is a little ground, very proper for gardening.* Frequent rains which do not lie any time on the soil, give growth to plants of an exquisite flavour, and cabbages of an extraordinary size. Throughout America there is no blood so pure as that of Saba; the women there preserve a freshness of complexion which is not to be found in any other of the Caribbee Islands. Happy Colony! Elevated on the top of a rock, between the sky and the sea, it enjoys the benefit of both elements without dreading their storms. The inhabitants breathe a pure air, live upon vegetables, cultivate a simple commodity, from which they derive ease without the temptation of riches; are employed in labours less troublesome than useful; and possess in
peace

* This little Island is about sixteen or eighteen miles in circumference.

peace all the blessings of moderation, health, beauty and liberty.

"This is the Temple of peace, from whence the philosopher may contemplate at leisure the errors and passions of men, who come like the sea, to strike and dash themselves on the rich coast of America, the spoils and possession of which they are perpetually contending for and wresting from each other. Hence may he view at a distance the nations of Europe, bearing thunder in the midst of the ocean, and burning with the flames of ambition and avarice under the Tropics, devouring gold without ever being satisfied, wading through seas of blood to amass those metals, those pearls, those diamonds which are used to adorn the oppressors of mankind; loading innumerable ships with those precious casks, which furnish luxury with purple, and from which flow pleasures, effeminacy, cruelty and debauchery. The tranquil inhabitant of Saba views this mass of follies, and spins in peace the cotton which constitutes all his finery and wealth."

On the 17th we landed at Tortola. This Island which contains about 1,000 Whites and 8,000 Blacks is indeed ripe for the gospel. It seems to be the general cry of the Negroes throughout the Island, "Let us have if possible a Methodist Minister."

After giving the inhabitants of Road-Town, (the principal town of this Island) a couple of sermons, we sailed for Santa Cruz, an Island belonging to Denmark. This last mentioned Island is supposed to contain about 30,000 inhabitants, who in general speak the English language. It is highly cultivated, and the town of Basse-End, its capital, is far the most beautiful I have seen in the Carribbee-Islands. The Governor general, through the warm recommendation of a worthy and respectable friend in London, received us with great courtesy, and promised

mised us all the protection and encouragement in his power.

Two gentlemen in the town shewed us many marks of respect, and an old Quaker-lady permitted me to preach in her house, and afterwards informed me that it should be always at our service.

And now I found myself in the utmost doubt and knew not which way to turn. Mr. Hammet was appointed for Jamaica; and there was no other Missionary to secure the advantages which the Lord had given us in these two Islands. At last we determined that Mr. Hammet should divide his labours between Tortola and Santa Cruz, till a couple of Missionaries are sent from England to prosecute the openings which divine providence has afforded us, and which, I doubt not, Mr. Hammet in the mean time will greatly improve. I shall also, God willing, visit Jamaica, to prepare his way in that populous and important Island.

We have now through the blessing of God on our endeavours, a prospect of much good in ten of the Islands, which unitedly contain about two hundred and sixty thousand inhabitants, near four fifths of whom are covered with heathenish darkness.

Before I conclude, it may not be unpleasing to add an account of the stations of our Missionaries and of the numbers in Society.

1st. The Stations of our Missionaries.

1. Antigua, Matthew Lum, John Harper.
2. St. Christopher's, William Warrenner,
3. St. Eustatius, George Skerret.
4. Nevis, Thomas Owens.
5. St. Vincents,

In the Caribb-Division, John Baxter.

In the English Division, Robert Gamble,
and John Clark.

6. Dominica

6. Dominica, William M'Cornock.
7. Barbadoes, Benjamin Pearce.
8. Saba, William Brazier.
9. Tortula and { William Hammet.
10. Santa Cruz, {

2dly. The numbers in Society.

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Antigua | { Whites 70 Blacks 2740 |
| 2. St. Christopher's | { Whites 50 Coloured People 650 |
| 3. St. Eustatius | { Whites 8 Coloured People 250 |
| 4. St. Vincent's | { Whites 250 Coloured people 139 |
| 5. Dominica | { Coloured People 24 |
| 6. Barbadoes | { Whites 6 |

In all 3949*.

* Besides Catechumens.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient, and

Affectionate Son,

THOMAS COKE.



